

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Joint Statement by President Barack Obama and President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia Regarding Cooperation on Visa Issues

May 26, 2011

Last June, when we met in Washington, we expressed our determination to establish stronger bilateral ties on the basis of mutually beneficial cooperation. We are seeking to expand our economic and trade relations, and also to strengthen contacts between our citizens. As has been highlighted in many of the meetings of the Working Groups of the Presidential Commission, the current state of visa procedures between our countries does not correspond to the present level of collaboration nor to the development of bilateral relations that we hope is to come.

We continue to seek ways to facilitate travel between our countries, consistent with the laws and regulations of both countries. Over the past year, our officials have clarified the requirements for travel for purposes of tourism, work, and study, and we intend to streamline this process in order to make travel easier. As a first major step, we have instructed our officials to concentrate on visa liberalization on a reciprocal basis for the largest segments of our traveling nationals—business travelers and tourists, traveling both as individuals and in groups, and official representatives. Taking into account the significant progress achieved by our negotiators, we are working on a new agreement to issue, as a general rule without unduly formalized invitations and justifications, multiple-entry visas for eligible business travelers and tourists of 36 month validity at a unified and reciprocal fee, as well as the issuance of 12-month, multiple-entry visas for official representatives of our countries. We aim to settle these issues and sign the agreement in the very near future, consistent with domestic procedures in both countries.

As relations between our countries grow stronger, and the ties become more intense, we will seek even greater simplification and liberalization of our countries' visa systems on a reciprocal basis, aimed at providing entry of U.S. citizens into Russia and of Russian citizens into the U.S. unencumbered by unnecessary formalities, in accordance with domestic legislation of each country. We are instructing our government agencies to work in this direction.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

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Names: Medvedev, Dmitry A.

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